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Marvel Zombies
Army of Darkness

New Life for Marvel Zombies and Ash

For a concept that grew out of an old joke, ***Marvel Zombies*** seems to be enjoying a very successful life!

Back in the 1980s, "Marvel zombie" was used to describe a fan who bought every Marvel comic, regardless of the content. It was writer *Mark Millar* who decided to interpret the phrase literally in the pages of ***Ultimate Fantastic Four***, and thus the Marvel Zombies were given literary life. It was *Robert Kirkman* who transformed them into stars in their own right, though, with the ***Marvel Zombies*** limited series?

Did Kirkman ever envision the ***Marvel Zombies*** concept turning into a virtual franchise of its own? "No, that's been a huge—and very welcome—surprise," Kirkman said. "I kinda kept my head down and had fun writing the original miniseries; I just wrote what I thought was interesting and entertaining, and while I was writing it I never in a million years thought it would take off like it has. I mean, a good portion of the success has to be chalked up to the flat-out uniqueness of *Arthur Suydam's* covers, but I never in a million years would have guessed the mainstream Marvel Comics reading audience would be this disturbed!"

From that limited series that would not die (not only did almost every issue of the comic go through multiple printings, but the hardcover collection is going into its third edition as well!) comes three new projects—a prequel, a sequel, and an ***Army of Darkness/Marvel Zombies*** crossover series, produced by Dynamite Entertainment and distributed by Marvel. "The prequel is called ***Marvel Zombies: Dark Days*** and that's set for April, with the same team as the original mini from top to bottom," Kirkman said. "The ***Army of Darkness*** crossover runs concurrently with ***Dark Days*** and fits in seamlessly with continuity. You don't have to read both books, but if you do, you'll get the added thrill of connecting all the dots and experiencing a much greater story and seeing how everything connects. It'll be a load of fun!" After that comes the second ***Marvel Zombies*** limited series, set to debut later this year.

"I'll add that as far as ***Army of Darkness*** goes, the events of this mini will have an effect on the future of our ***AoD*** relaunch," Dynamite publisher *Nick Barrucci* added. "After all, the end of the *series* was a direct tie-in, so the end of the *crossover* should be a direct tie-in as well!"

While there's a great deal of grotesque humor in both ***Marvel Zombies*** and ***Army of Darkness***, Layman sees the humor as different in tone, and part of his job was to make the two work together. "Without over-analyzing it, the entire ***Marvel Zombies*** is a bit of a parody, at least a very skewed take on traditional superheroics. The ***Army of Darkness*** property, along the same vein, plays with the toys of conventions of the horror genre. It's a great fit—once you figure out exactly how Ash can survive up against Zombie Wolverine, Zombie Thor, Zombie Spidey, and other Marvel heavy hitters!"

What's been the most rewarding part of the assignment for Layman? "Writing characters that I've loved for years—if not decades—and combining them as 'two great tastes that taste great together' is certainly the best part of the gig. When ***Marvel Zombies*** stories started coming out, I slapped my forehead and thought the entire concept was *genius*, and wished I could be a part of it, never actually expecting to. And I've been a longtime fan of both *Sam Raimi* and *Bruce Campbell*."

What's been the biggest challenge Layman has faced with ***Marvel Zombies/Army of Darkness?*** "The pressure to do justice to both properties, to make the story every bit as great as it should be," Layman said.

And just how handy *is* a chainsaw against a Marvel Zombie? "Depends on the Zombie. Against Zombie Colossus or Zombie Iron Man, not so much. But squishier Zombie heroes and villains chop up real nice!" Layman replied.

Does Kirkman have further plans for the Marvel Zombies after the prequel, crossover, and followup limited series? "Let's see if the sequel tanks, first," Kirkman said. "But for my money I'd *love* to keep doing a mini-series every now and then as *Sean Phillips* schedule opens up. I know that how the first mini ended, it *seems* that there's not a lot of places to go, but I've thought about it and there's a *lot* more potential there. I'm itching to get started working on the sequel and see where things go from there."

While Kirkman is writing the prequel and the sequel, the crossover series will be written by *John Layman*. Did Kirkman have to do anything to make Layman's story work within Kirkman's zombie master plan? "John and I had our discussions before he started writing, so there was very little to change after his scripts were written," Kirkman said. "Also, the script for ***Marvel Zombies: Dark Days*** was done well before John started on this mini and that's kind of the road map here as far as continuity goes.

"Also, John's a terrific writer and he's done a great job on things like ***House of M: Fantastic Four*** and ***Sentinel Squad O.N.E.*** and was writing a ***Gambit*** series when I was doing a ***Jubilee*** series at Marvel... and kept doing it after my ***Jubilee*** series was cancelled. John knows what he's doing and I think that the story he's come up with is absolutely fantastic. My only concern with the whole thing is that it might be better than what I wrote on the original miniseries!"

In writing a followup to one of 2006's biggest sleeper hits, Layman has taken on a pretty tough assignment—not only does he have to tell an entertaining and exciting story, but he has to make it work with two very diverse continuities. How did he prepare for the assignment? "Mostly just read up on both continuities," Layman said, "and by 'reading up' I mean scouring the Kirkman and Millar ***Marvel Zombie*** stories, and reading both the Dynamite ***Army of Darkness*** series and watching and re-watching ***Army Of Darkness*** and the two ***Evil Dead*** movies.

"I can't say too much about this, but I was already working on a project featuring Ash, so I'd done my 'research' on him and already had a good feel for his character and voice. And last year I *did* the writing on the upcoming Marvel Trading Card video game, to be released in March, which featured almost every Marvel hero, and was a good primer for doing a story which features as much of the Marvel Universe as I can squeeze in."

What did *Robert Kirkman* give Layman to work with? Is there a ***Marvel Zombie Handbook/Bible***, or an outline of future zombie plans? "Robert helped with timing and coordination of events, giving me the inside scoop about who is where and when, and some of how the 'rules' of this zombie plague works," Layman said. "In the initial stages of the project, we discussed the story, and he's read over the scripts, to make sure it doesn't violate any continuity from his mini."

So how *does* Ash end up in the Marvel Zombieverse? "That's going to be revealed in the first issue," Layman said. "Suffice to say, Ash is a bit of a bumbler, and he can't even die correctly without screwing things up and making trouble. As has been previously announced, Ash died at the end of Dynamite's ***AOD #13...*** I pick up things from there."

Will the story focus on a small group of Marvel zombies, or does Layman intend to play with as much of the zombieverse cast as he can get away with? "It's a bit like channel flipping, as I jump around the Marvel U, and you meet lots of heroes and villains, some of whom play a more major role, while others just have brief cameos," Layman said. "My heart goes out to artist *Fabiano Neves*, who not only has to draw all these sequences of grotesque carnage, but he's got to draw about a million different Marvel characters, committing horrible, heinous outrages—or having horrible, heinous outrages perpetrated upon them."

Is it true that the events of this book will end up having ramifications on *both* series? "We're filling in a lot of the blanks in ***Marvel Zombies***, bridging gaps between what we've seen before, and explaining the fates of various Marvel characters, how this or that character became infected, or what happened to various Marvel characters which have not shown up in the Kirkman-penned stories."

Does Dynamite already have cover artist *Arthur Suydam* working on variant covers for the inevitable second printings of the crossover series? "We certainly *hope* that we're able to go into second printings," Barrucci said, "and aside from the Dynamic Forces alternative and exclusive covers that Arthur is doing for us, yes, Arthur would be able to come up with some new and twisted variations on Marvel's greatest moments."

Marvel Zombies/Army of Darkness #1, a $2.99 comic produced by Dynamite and Marvel, is scheduled for early March release. Fans who want to get in on the ground floor, though, should track down ***Army of Darkness #13***, which was released in early January; not only does it pave the way for the crossover, but the last page of the comic actually marks the first appearance of Ash and the Marvel Zombies in the same continuity, leading directly into ***Marvel Zombies/Army of Darkness #1.***

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

Dynamite Makes Theirs Marvel Again!

On the first page of this issue of *CSN*, you can read all about the first Dynamite-Marvel crossover—but it won't be the last! "We'll be working with Marvel once again in 2007, on a project that will feature Spider-Man and a Dynamite player to be named later," Barrucci said. So who is it? You'll find out in the next week or two here in *CSN!*

Sean McKeever Loves DC

He may be the writer best known for his Marvel work (including such series as ***Spider-Man Loves Mary Jane*** and the upcoming ***Spider-Man Family***), but readers who want to enjoy *Sean McKeever's* work will be adding DC titles to their reading list. The writer has just signed an exclusive with DC, which means he'll be wrapping up his Marvel work in the next few months.

McKeever has been working for Marvel for so long that many may have assumed that he was exclusive there, but that wasn't the case. "I've been doing a lot of stuff for Marvel, obviously, for the last few years," McKeever said. "But I had kind of flirted with doing some stuff for DC before. I actually wrote the first issue of a Vertigo series that never launched. And I had a couple other pitches happen throughout the years, but those never turned into anything.

"But last year, [editor] *Mike Marts* moved over to DC. So I went to New York in September for a personal trip, and I decided to spend a few extra days and go to the Marvel offices -- and go to the DC offices and see Mike, and hopefully meet some editors over there. And it's funny -- I went to the Marvel offices, and a lot of the editors there, at some point in the conversation -- you know, just chewing the fat with them -- said, 'You *are* Marvel exclusive, right?'

"I said, 'No! I'm not Marvel exclusive.' And he just suddenly said, 'Oh, well let me take you around and introduce you to people! Let me go see if *Dan DiDio's* busy right now.' I got to meet Dan, and I met some other editors. And Dan's a pretty good guy, and we seemed to get along fairly well. And out of that, they were interested in having me pitch a couple things, and I thought that was great. And fast forward a month later, and they offered me some pretty big work and an exclusive to go along with it!"

So what's the big work? McKeever's keeping that a secret for now, but when pressed, he did offer ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Vaneta Rogers* one word to get the buzz going regarding his next project: "Death." He won't say anything more than that, however.

McKeever is thrilled to be at DC, and very happy of the welcome he's received there. "It's a fantastic deal they've given me. Everyone's been super nice and I'm just so thrilled to get the chance to play with their toys. I mean, it's almost like it's Christmas Eve and I'm eight years old, you know? I truly feel this is the right move for me at this point in my career."

While McKeever won an Eisner in 2005 as Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition, the writer had never landed a major high-profile project at Marvel; did that play a part in his decision to take DC up on their offer? "Well, yeah, it did," McKeever said. "To Marvel's credit, there were a couple big things that I was attached to. But every time, something would happen that would stop it. You know, the project would get canceled before I even wrote the first script. Or the first script would be written and the project would get put on hold. It was always for various reasons that were beyond my control -- and I wasn't really privy to all the reasons why. So, it was frustrating.

"So yeah, that was a big part of the appeal of DC's offer was that they do want me to do some high-profile stuff. I'm not just going to jump over and do Johnny DC—not that there's anything wrong with Johnny DC. And you know, not that there's anything wrong with Marvel Adventures books. But I would like to take some time to do some stories that more eyeballs are going to be looking at. I'd be happy to write all-ages stuff in the future. But I think I need a little break from that."

Since negotiations began, McKeever has been busily reading a wide assortment of DCU titles to get himself up to speed. Does he see obvious differences in DC and Marvel books? "Oh, absolutely. There are a lot of differences. But you know, one of the things I like in particular about DC is that there's a sense of not only history, but of legacy. If somebody dies, a character will replace them. I think that's cool, and I think it's a great way to grow and change and evolve the universe. Obviously, though, you can't really do that with Superman and Batman—and of course, they tried with Green Arrow and it didn't really take. But the cool thing about it is that, for the most part, the characters aren't safe. There will be a new Blue Beetle, so Ted Kord can die -- and I'm going to catch a lot of flack for saying that -- but there's a greater sense of danger for the characters because of the ongoing feeling of legacy there.

"That's more exciting to me as a reader. Going in, I don't know what might happen. There are no safe characters outside a couple. And as a writer, that's exciting as well. It's actually fairly freeing."

How much more work does McKeever have in the Marvel pipeline? "Well, with ***Spider-Man Family***, when I was asked to do the book, I was asked to do six issues, and we wound up agreeing on me doing three. It was all I could reasonably commit to because I didn't know what was coming up in the future. So I am still doing three issues. I'm doing the first two issues, and then I'm doing a special third issue to be released at a future date with a special guest artist.

As far as ***Spider-Man Loves Mary Jane***, is concerned, my last issue of that will be #20... Leaving that book was a huge heartbreak for me. And it still is. I've got two issues left to write at this point. I will have written 28 issues of that book by the time I'm done, and that's the most I've ever written of any one title. And that book just means a lot to me. It has a special place in my heart. It's a lot like breaking up with a girlfriend, to leave that book. So I'm still kind of struggling with it."

Look for more news about McKeever's DC projects in upcoming issues of *CSN*.

And the War Goes On...

Just as this issue of *CSN* was going to press, Marvel announced that ***Civil War #7*** has been pushed back from its twice-rescheduled date to a new tentative release date of February 21st. In a press release, Marvel said that the additional delay came about in part because the story got too big—literally! "***Civil War #7*** has topped out at 28 pages of story content—six more than a normal comic," editor *Tom Brevoort* said. "As such, we need to block in a little bit more time to make sure that *Steve [McNiven,* artist on the series] can get it done—especially since these are some of the most difficult pages in the entire series to draw from a number-of-characters-on-the-page perspective."

Marvel has also announced the addition of a surprise ***Civil War*** epilogue book, ***Civil War: The Confession,*** produced by *Brian Bendis & Alex Maleev,* the same team that helped to kick off the whole ***Civil War*** extravaganza with their work on the ***New Avengers: Illuminati*** one-shot. In this powerful issue, two of the Marvel heroes most affected by the shocking conclusion of the war get together one last time; what is said between them will set the course of the Marvel Universe for years to come.

Here are further revisions to the ***Civil War*** schedule:

- January 24th: ***Civil War: The Return; Moon Knight #7; Punisher War Journal #3***
- January 31st: ***Black Panther #24***
- February 7th: ***Civil War: Black Panther—War Crimes*** (compiles ***Black Panther #s 21-23***)
- February 14th: ***Civil War: Casualties of War*** (compiles ***Iron Man/Captain America, War Crimes, & Winter Soldier*** oneshots)
- February 21st: ***Civil War #7; Amazing Spider-Man #538; Civil War Poster Book; Fantastic Four #543; Moon Knight #8***
- February 28th: ***Black Panther #25; Civil War—Front Line #11; Civil War—The Initiative***
- March 7th: ***Captain America #25; Civil War—Battle Damage Report; Marvel Spotlight—Civil War Aftermath;***
- March 14th: ***Civil War—The Confession; Moon Knight #9***

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TANK GIRL

ALAN MARTIN ASHLEY WOOD

Tanks for the Memories

Tank Girl is on her way back to comic shops—but you're forgiven if you don't recognize her right away!

Artist *Ashley Wood* has announced on his blog that he will be illustrating a new ***Tank Girl*** series for IDW, working with the character's co-creator *Alan Martin*... but gone will be the punk look and the anarchic fashion that previously defined the character. As *Alan Martin* explained, "We were concerned that she didn't make her re-appearance in the same, tired old clothes that she bowed out in some twelve years ago. What was alternative, upsetting, anarchic, and just plain oddball back then has since become common place. Mainstream media smothers us daily with punky chic, and modern day babies can be seen sporting spikey hairdos and Travis Bickle T-shirts. The uniform of the cultural revolutionary has been sold to The Man.

"So how to rebel? How give the finger to the fashion fascists?

"Normal is the only way ahead. Dress like a high school teacher from the mid-eighties, or pick clothes from your boring aunty's wardrobe.

"The only way left to rebel is to dress like you're not rebelling!"

Get a look at the all-new, all-different fashion-rebellious ***Tank Girl*** in May.

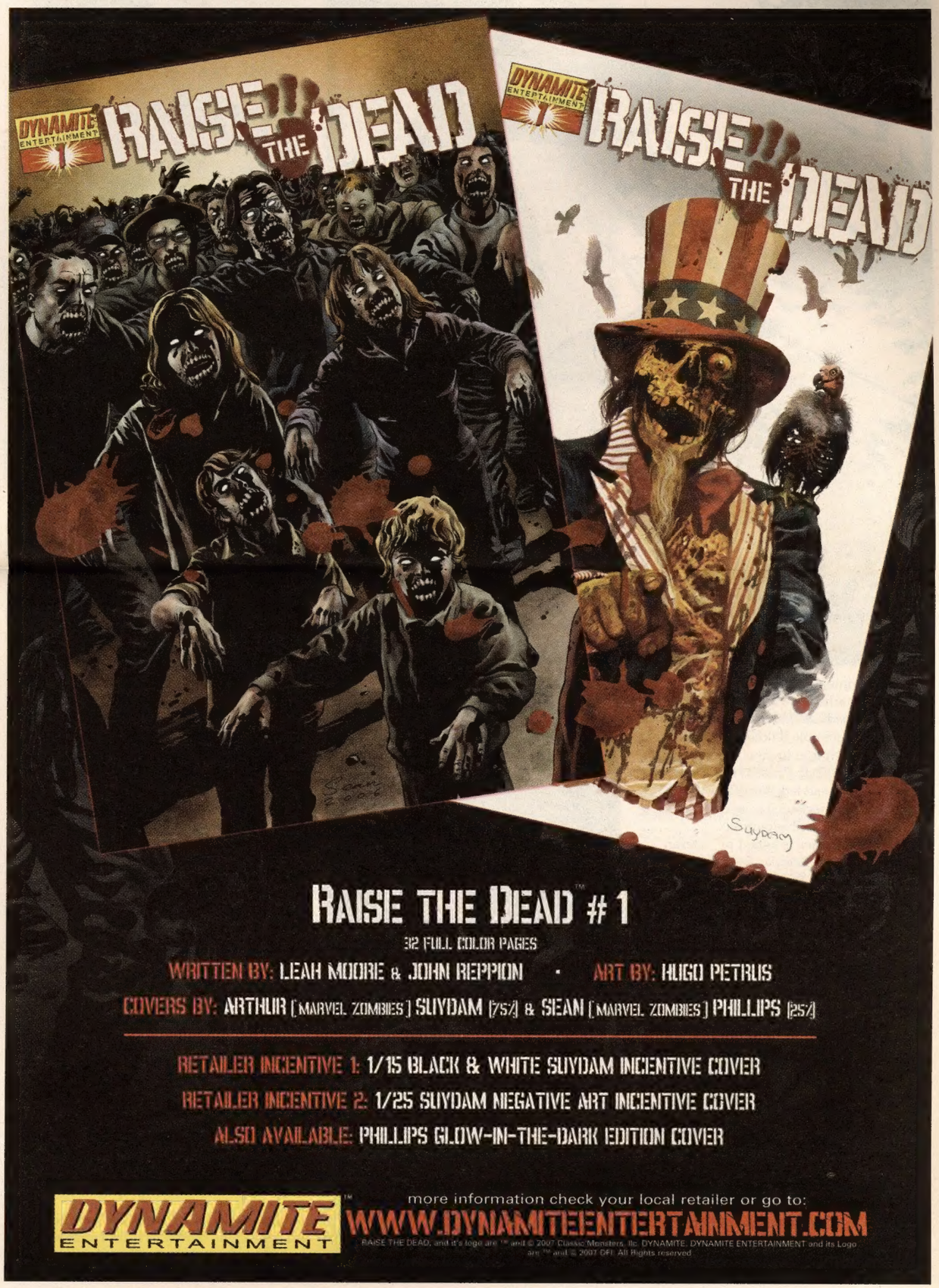
Coming Comics—Dark Horse in April

Dark Horse offers readers a look behind the creation of one of the most acclaimed all-ages fantasy sagas of recent times in ***The Art of Bone.*** The distinctive work of writer/artist *Jeff Smith* is the focus of this 200-page full-color hardcover, which offers a look at the the homemade comics, sketches, and grand plans that set this masterpiece of literary fantasy in motion through the promotional art and published work that put ***Bone*** and Smith on the map.

Sculptor *Tony Cipriano* does the honors on the ***Bettie Page Statue,*** a 13" tall sculpture of the pinup icon.

Joss Whedon's "eighth season" of ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer*** continues in the second issue of the ongoing series, featuring art by *Georges Jeanty & Andy Owens*. The destruction of Buffy's hometown, plus covert and powerful slayer "cells" around the world, add up to a new label for the Scoobies: Terrorist threat. Speaking of Sunnydale, the crater formerly known as, has opened to reveal the witch Amy—and boy is she pissed! Now: Giles, smoochies, a knife to the heart, and a big sleep!...

Dark Horse's line of syroco-styled statues of Golden Age DC icons continues with ***Classic DC Character #4: The Flash,*** limited to 2000 hand-numbered pieces and packaged in a tin with a booklet about the char-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DYNAMITE ENTERTAINMENT 1
RAISE THE DEAD
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acter and a vintage-style pinback button.

Next to Charlie Brown himself, no character more defined *Charles Schulz's* ***Peanuts*** than that irrepressible li'l beagle. Now you can add his sculpture to your collection with the release of ***Classic Peanuts Character #7: Snoopy,*** a syroco-styled statue limited to 1200 pieces and packaged in a tin box with a booklet and a collectible button.

Writer *Tim Truman* is joined by veteran Conan artist *Rafael Kayanan* for ***Conan #39,*** which also features the return of Janissa the Widowmaker.

Some of the most fondly-remembered all-ages comics of all times return in collected editions, beginning with the release of ***Harvey Comics Classics Volume One: Casper the Friendly Ghost,*** a 480-page black-and-white collection of more than a hundred Casper tales from the 1950s and 1960s.

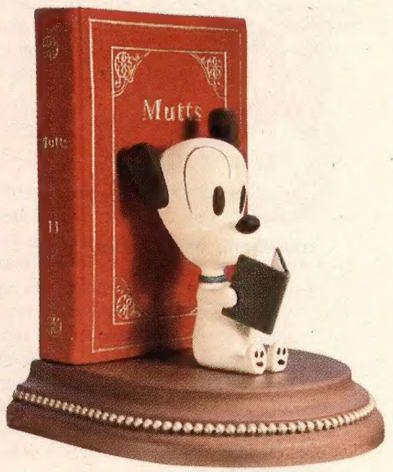
Jim Pascoe, Tad Stones, & Rick Lacy offer more original Hellboy adventures done in cartoon style in ***Hellboy Animated Volume Two: The Judgement Bell,*** an eighty-page original digest.

Want to know more about *Mike Mignola's* famous monster hunter? Then you'll have to check out ***Hellboy: The Companion,*** a 200-page trade paperback by *Stephen Weiner, Jason Hall, Victoria Blake, & Mike Mignola* that offers thorough documentation of the Hellboy universe, compiling the many complex pieces that make up the life of the World's Greatest Paranormal Investigator

into an easily understandable format.

Mike Mignola presents the followup to 2005's ***Hellboy: The Island*** with the release of ***Hellboy: Darkness Calls #1,*** the kickoff issue of a six-part series illustrated by *Duncan Fegredo*. In this dark drama, witches all across the world seek out Hellboy—but this time, they're *not* just after revenge.

Matt & Shawn Fillbach present their most ambitious work to date in ***Maxwell***



Strangewell, a 384-page graphic novel about aliens, amnesia, and a galaxy in peril. It begins when photographer Anna Gilmour discovers a ten-foot-tall being immediately after his fall to Earth. He can't speak, but communicates through telepathic empathy, and Anna introduces him to her father as "Max." Their home is soon beset by a sea of beatific Tibetan monks, alien assassins in disguise, and heavy weapon fire! Max might not know who he is, but a lot of others sure as heck seem to!...

x *Patrick McDonnell's* comic strip stars enter the third dimension with the release of the ***Mutts Bookends,*** a two-piece set designed and sculpted by the talents at Yoe! Studio.

Eric Powell presents what Dark Horse describes as "the single most offensive, controversial, and flat-out loathsome comic ever published by Dark Horse" with the release of ***Satan's ****** Baby,*** a oneshot that is definitely *not* all-ages-friendly!

Star Wars: Clone Wars Adventures Volume Eight continues Dark Horse's presentation of original tales done in the same stripped-down animated style of the Cartoon Network micro-series.

Dark Horse collected editions include:

- ***Hellgate: London,*** collecting the miniseries by *Ian Edginton & Steve Pugh;*

Star Wars: Clone Wars Adventures Volume Eight continues Dark Horse's presentation of original tales done in the same stripped-down animated style of the Cartoon Network micro-series.

- ***Penny Arcade Volume Four: Birds Are Weird,*** presenting 112 pages worth of web-comics by *Jerry Holkins & Mike Krahulik;*
- ***Star Wars 30th Anniversary Collection Volume Four: Jango Fett/Zam Wesell,*** collecting the two out-of-print graphic novels in one hardcover; and
- ***Star Wars Omnibus: X-Wing Rogue Squadron Volume Three,*** collecting ***X-Wing Rogue Squadron #s 21-35*** in one massive volume.

Ins & Outs

Out: The second printing of ***Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter—Guilty Pleasures #1*** has sold out from Marvel and Dabel Brothers Productions. There are no current plans for a third printing.

In: *David Mack,* creator of ***Kabuki*** and writer of the Eisner nominated run on Marvel's ***Daredevil,*** is writing the sixth installment of Zenescope Entertainment's ***Se7en.*** The series focuses on the back-story of John Doe, the villain played by *Kevin Spacey* in the New Line Cinema film. Each issue in the series tackles one of the seven deadly sins, with Mack fielding ***Envy.***

Out: Another *Michael Turner* cover image featuring the post-***Civil War*** Fantastic Four line-up has been released... or at least, a *possible* post-***Civil War*** line-up. Obviously, this team has little in common with the prior image that ***CSN*** shared with readers. So which—if either—is correct? We'll all know in March!

February's Top Twenty Comics

ACTION COMICS #847

Geoff Johns & Richard Donner (W); Adam Kubert (A)

(DC DEC060190 $3.99; 2-D variant also available (DEC060189 $2.99))

What's the Scoop?

In the final part of the "Last Son" storyline, Superman travels to the Phantom Zone, a bizarre realm that's so extra-dimensional that DC enlisted 3D master *Ray Zone* to take the tale into the third dimension.

Why Should You Care?

Geoff Johns & Richard Donner reinterpret General Zod in this story arc, bringing a sense of gravitas to a character who's been underplayed in comics for decades.

ALL STAR SUPERMAN #7

Grant Morrison (W); Frank Quitely (A)

(DC OCT060165 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Superman meets his dopey doppelganger, Bizarro, in the latest issue of the finest Superman books on the stands.

Why Should You Care?

Grant Morrison & Frank Quitely continue to mine the Superman mythos in this series, restoring the sense of wonder that all too many writers have forgotten. Oh, if only the entire DCU could be reinterpreted with such vitality and enthusiasm!...

BATMAN #663

Grant Morrison (W); John Van Fleet (A)

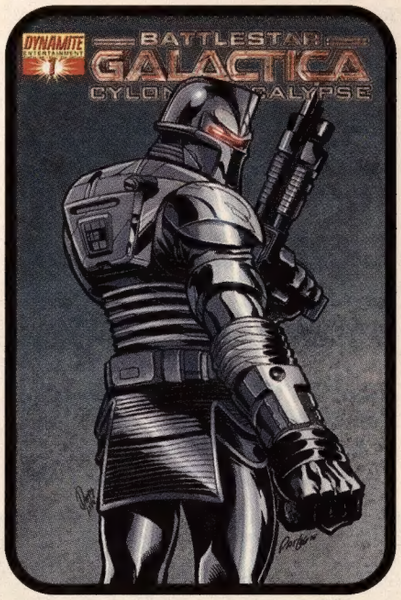
(DC DEC060180 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

The last time we saw the Joker, he had been shot in the face. Bad news for Gotham: he got better! And now he's looking for revenge against Batman... even though Batman wasn't responsible for what happened to him to begin with! (Hey, he's crazy, remember?)

Why Should You Care?

Grant Morrison channels the classic 1970's Batman work of *Denny O'Neil* at his finest as he restores Batman to his role as the confident, capable Dark Knight Detective. Welcome back, Batman—we missed you!



BATTLESTAR GALACTICA: CYLON APOCALYPSE #1

Javier Grillo-Marxuach (W); Carlos Rafael (A)

(Dynamite DEC063460 $3.50)

What's the Scoop?

What would cause Cylon Raiders to attack one of their own Basestars? That's what Adama and Starbuck want to know!

Why Should You Care?

Javier Grillo-Marxuach, well known for his television work on ***Lost*** and ***Medium*** as well as his comics work for Marvel and other companies, makes his ***Battlestar: Galactica*** debut with this classic BSG miniseries.

BRAVE AND THE BOLD #1

Mark Waid (W); George Pérez & Bob Wiacek (A)

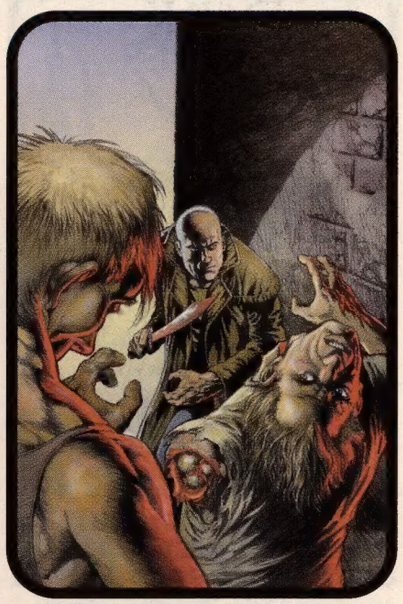
(DC DEC060210 $2.99; also available signed by George Pérez (DEC063551 $19.99) or by Mark Waid (DEC063550 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?

On the trail of what could be the greatest weapon in the DCU, Batman and Green Lantern travel to Ventura, the gambling planet, where the odds don't seem to be in their favor...

Why Should You Care?

DC resurrects one of the most acclaimed and fondly remembered crossover series in comic book history—and no only have they put together the all-star superteam of Batman and Green Lantern to kick off the series, they've also put together the all-star superteam of *Mark Waid & George Pérez* to make this a can't-miss relaunch!



CITY OF OTHERS #1

Steve Niles (W); Bernie Wrightson (A)

(Dark Horse DEC060013 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

A hired killer with a bad temper targets a pair of targets who just won't die, drawing him into a twisted reality he never imagined could exist... a reality in which their are much worse monsters than him!

Why Should You Care?

Contemporary horror-meister *Steve Niles* is united with horror-art legend *Bernie Wrightson*, who makes his long-awaited return to comics with this compelling series.

CIVIL WAR: THE INITIATIVE

Brian Bendis & Warren Ellis (W); Marc Silvestri (A)

(Marvel DEC062306 $4.99)

What's the Scoop?

In the aftermath of ***Civil War,*** there are major changes coming to the Marvel Universe—and you can get a first look at them here. See how Iron Man, the Avengers, and others will be modified in the Post-CW Marvelverse!

Why Should You Care?

The Marvel Universe is going to be a very different place for the foreseeable future, and Brian Bendis & Marc Silvestri reveal some of the most startling changes in this pivotal book, which acts as a prologue for a number of Marvel series.

FALL OF CTHULHU #1

Michael Alan Nelson (W); Jean-Jacques Dzialowski (A)

(Boom! DEC063426 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Human innocents are caught in the middle of horrid forces they can't begin to comprehend as another call for Cthulhu begins... but will this be the final call for the Elder Gods, or the final call for humanity?

Why Should You Care?

Fall of Cthulhu brings *H.P. Lovecraft's* distinctive horror concepts to comics in a series that remains true to the work of the master storyteller.

FLASH: THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE #9

Marc Guggenheim (W); Ron Adrian & Art Thibert (A)

(DC DEC060213 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Bart Allen knows that he wants to be a team player... but now it's time to decide which team: the Justice League or the Teen Titans!

Why Should You Care?

New writer *Marc Guggenheim* gets Bart Allen's saga back on track with a series that focuses on the speedster's role in the post-***Crisis*** DC Universe.

GHOST RIDER: TRAIL OF TEARS #1

Garth Ennis (W); Clayton Crain (A)

(Marvel DEC062315 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Travis Parham, a former lieutenant in the Confederate Army, thought he'd seen all the horrors life had to offer... but he's about to discover a fiery terror that he never imagined!

Why Should You Care?

Garth Ennis & Clayton Crain, creators of last year's miniseries that put ***Ghost Rider*** back on the map, reunite for this Civil War-era prequel.

HELMET OF FATE: SARGON THE SORCERER #1

Steve Niles (W); Scott Hampton (A)

(DC DEC060202 $2.99)

HELMET OF FATE: ZAURIEL #1

Steve Gerber (W); Peter Snejbjerg (A)

(DC DEC060203 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

There's a new Doctor Fate on the way... but before the Helmet of Fate settles on a new wearer, it's going to make the rounds to check out some intriguing possibilities!

Why Should You Care?

Who'll be the latest hero to don the golden helmet? We don't know, but watching the "tryouts" promises to be fascinating—particularly with talent like this involved!

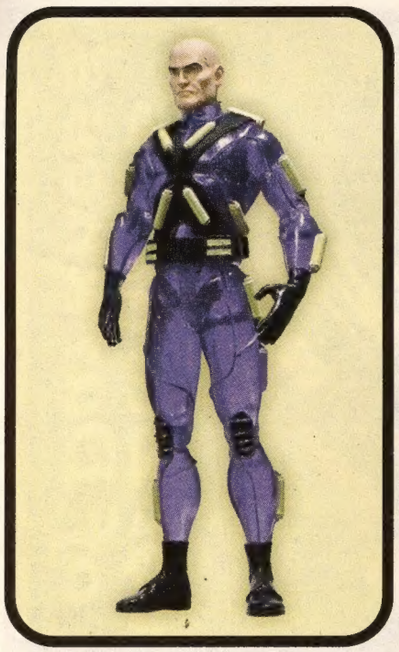
IT RHYMES WITH LUST TP

Arnold Drake & Leslie Waller (W); Matt Baker (A)

(Dark Horse NOV060026 $14.95)

What's the Scoop?

A cynical newspaperman rekindles an old romance... but he soon discovers that his old love, the widow of a mining magnate, is willing to use any means and any person—including her former love—to achieve political power.



JUSTICE LEAGUE ALEX ROSS SERIES 5 LEX LUTHOR ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct JUL060266 $19.99)

JUSTICE LEAGUE ALEX ROSS SERIES 5 MARTIAN MANHUNTER ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct JUL060268 $19.99)

JUSTICE LEAGUE ALEX ROSS SERIES 5 COMPLETE SET

(DC Direct JUL060264 $99.99)

Alex Ross's art is the inspiration for the fifth in DC Direct's series of Justice League action figures.

SHAZAM 13" DELUXE COLLECTOR FIGURE

(DC Direct JUL060262 $69.99)

This deluxe collector figure comes clothed in an authentically detailed fabric costume, includes a display stand, and is packaged in a deluxe four-color window box.

FYI:

Great Additions to Your Reference Library

ALTER EGO #65

(TwoMorrows DEC064009 $6.95)

Silver Age great *Nick Cardy* is spotlighted in this issue.

BLUE BEETLE COMPANION SC

(TwoMorrows DEC063946 $16.95)

The history of the various incarnations of the Blue Beetle over the past two-thirds of a century are the focus of this intriguing volume.

MILTON CANIFF'S TERRY & THE PIRATES & STEVE CANYON: MEANWHILE SC

(Fantagraphics DEC063566 $34.95)

This volume traces Caniff's life from the cradle to the grave, marking Caniff's distinctive contributions to the development of the comic strip.

Check 'Em Out:

Books You Should Be Reading

AMERICAN ELF VOL 2: COLLECTORS' SKETCHBOOK DIARIES OF JAMES KOCHALKA

(Top Shelf DEC063936 $19.95)

The work of indy star *James Kochalka* is spotlighted in this collection of diary strips.

BALM IN GILEAD VOL 1 GN

(Mahrwood DEC063748 $19.95)

Some of comics' top talents contribute to this book to raise money for children suffering from terrorist attacks in Northern Israel. Contributors include *Neal Adams, Jon Bogdanove, Dave Cockrum, Jack Dann, Peter David, Colleen Doran, David Gerrold, Harvey Jacobs, Jeffrey Jones, Joe Kubert, Stan Lee, Robert Silverberg, William Tenn, Len Wein, Marv Wolfman,* and more.

JONAH HEX #16

(DC DEC060223 $2.99)

Jonah Hex has ridden with his share of outlaws, cutthroats and even supernatural gunfighters, but he's about to meet his match in the deadly young woman known as Tallulah Black.

LOVE AND CAPES #3

(Maerkle DEC063744 $3.95)

Mark is about to face the most challenging assignment of his superhero career—finding a date for his girlfriend's sister—in the latest installment of this human interest comedy-drama about a romance between a superhero and a normal woman.

Why Should You Care?
This lost work, proclaimed by some to be the first true graphic novel, returns to print for the first time in over a half-century. Not only can you enjoy the noir drama, but you can also learn the story *behind* the story, told to you by award-winning co-writer *Arnold Drake*.

JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA #3

Geoff Johns (W); Dale Eaglesham & Art Thibert (A)
(DC DEC060229 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
It looks like someone has plans to knock off the members of the new Justice Society almost as quickly as the team can reassemble! Who's behind the murderous scheme, and what new hero will rise to challenge the schemers?

Why Should You Care?
Geoff Johns is turning out the best work of his most impressive comics career in this JSA relaunch—and it gets even better with each passing issue!

LEGION OF MONSTERS: WEREWOLF BY NIGHT #1

Mike Carey & Skottie Young (W); Greg Land & Skottie Young (A)
(Marvel DEC062323 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
The Werewolf by Night returns in this tale that redefines Jacob Russell's role in the Marvel Universe. And if that's not enough, there's a Monster of Frankenstein back-up tale!

Why Should You Care?
Marvel's almost-forgotten monsters of the 1970s make a comeback in a trio of oneshots, of which this is the first.

NEW AVENGERS #27

Brian Bendis (W); Leinil Francis Yu (A)
(Marvel DEC062329 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
The New Avengers make their post-***Civil War*** debut... but just who are the *new* New Avengers, and what will their role be in the aftermath of ***Civil War?***

Why Should You Care?
Brian Bendis presents the new lineup of the superteam that was at the center of the War Between the Heroes—and he's joined by new artist *Leinil Yu*, making his debut as series illustrator.

SHAZAM: THE MONSTER SOCIETY OF EVIL #1

Jeff Smith (W/A)
(DC DEC060247 $5.99)

What's the Scoop?
Young Billy Batson gains amazing powers... and that's a good thing, because he's about to confront an all-but-unstoppable cadre of alien and earthly monsters!

Why Should You Care?
No artist is a more perfect choice to reinterpret the Earth's Mightiest Mortal than *Jeff Smith*, creator of the remarkable all-ages ***Bone*** saga. Now Smith retells Captain Marvel's most spectacular adventure in an unforgettable four-issue prestige-format miniseries that recaptures the hero's all-ages charm.

STEPHEN KING'S DARK TOWER: GUNSLINGER BORN #1

Peter David & Robin Furth (W); Jae Lee & Richard Isanove (A)
(Marvel DEC062284 $3.99; also available in a signed and numbered edition (DEC063547 $29.99))

What's the Scoop?
The previously-unrevealed back story of Roland, the hero of *Stephen King's* ***Dark Tower*** saga, is the focus of this original series.

Why Should You Care?
Come on—it's an original prequel to some of the best-selling books in *Stephen King's* mega-selling canon, brought to you by an all-star team and personally overseen by *Stephen King* himself!

THUNDERBOLTS PRESENTS: ZEMO—BORN BETTER #1

Fabian Nicieza (W); Tom Grummett (A)
(Marvel DEC062338 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Torn from his own era and thrust into the past, Baron Helmut Zemo learns the truth of his family from the source when he comes face to face with the first of his family line, the legendary Baron Harbin Zemo.

Why Should You Care?
The debut of *Warren Ellis's* new hero-hunting Thunderbolts team doesn't mean that the members of the original Thunderbolts have been forgotten, as this series by ***Thunderbolts*** creators *Fabian Nicieza & Tom Grummett* proves!

TRANSFORMERS: PRIME DIRECTIVE MOVIE PREQUEL #1

Chris Ryall (W); Don Figeruoa (A)
(IDW DEC063644 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?
What led the Transformers to bring their war from Cybertron to Earth? Find out in this four-part prequel to the upcoming ***Transformers*** live-action film!

Why Should You Care?
This isn't an adaptation—it's an original story, and that means that everyone who's ever been a Transformers fan is going to want to read this before they see the summer movie.

WITCHBLADE MANGA #1

Yasuko Kobayashi (W); Kazasa Sumit (A)
(Image DEC061899 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Takeru, a schoolgirl raised in a Buddhist monastery, gains the power of the Witchblade in this manga addition to the Witchblade mythos.

Why Should You Care?
This uniquely Japanese Witchblade retelling is collected in standard full-color format for the first time in this limited series.

Collected Cool: February's Best Reprint Volumes

BONE VOL 5: ROCK JAW MASTER OF EASTERN BORDER COLOR ED HC

(Cartoon NOV063423 $18.99)

BONE VOL 5: ROCK JAW MASTER OF EASTERN BORDER COLOR ED SC

(Cartoon NOV063422 $9.99)

The latest volume of the full-color re-presentation of *Jeff Smith's* all-ages fantasy saga.

DAREDEVIL BY FRANK MILLER & KLAUS JANSON OMNIBUS VOL 1 HC

(Marvel DEC062363 $99.99; also available in a signed and numbered edition (DEC063554 $499.99))

The entire history-making *Frank Miller-Klaus Janson* run on ***Daredevil*** is collected in this massive 800+ page hardcover.

EC ARCHIVES: WEIRD SCIENCE VOL 2 HC

(Gemstone DEC063587 $49.99)

Collecting ***Weird Science #s 7-12***, complete with the sophisticated recoloring that makes this line so visually stunning.

KAMANDI ARCHIVES VOL 2 HC

(DC OCT060212 $49.99)

Jack Kirby's tale of an anthropomorphic future continues in this reprinting of ***Kamandi #s 11-20***.

MADMAN: GARGANTUA HC

(Image DEC061861 $125.00; also available in a signed edition (DEC061862 $150.00))

852-page collection of every Madman tale to date, paving the way for *Mike Allred's* forthcoming new series.

SHOWCASE PRESENTS AQUAMAN VOL 1 TP

(DC NOV060244 $16.99)

Long before he ever graduated to his own series, Aquaman starred in a number of backup tales in Adventure Comics. Now those rarely-seen stories are collected in this hefty black-and-white compendium.

Hot Commodities: February's Hottest Merchandising & Collectibles

BLACK BOLT STATUE

(Bowen OCT064419 $175.00)

The leader of the Inhumans is the latest addition to *Randy Bowen's* impressive line of statues.

HELLBOY ANIMATED MINI BUST: ABE SAPIEN

(Dark Horse NOV060072 $39.99)

HELLBOY ANIMATED MINI BUST: HELLBOY

(Dark Horse NOV060071 $39.99)

HELLBOY ANIMATED PVC SET

(Dark Horse OCT060059 $17.99)

The Hellboy Animated feature is the inspiration for this selection of minibusts and PVC figures depicting *Mike Mignola's* monster-hunters.

JUSTICE LEAGUE ALEX ROSS SERIES 5 BRAINIAC ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct JUL060269 $19.99)

JUSTICE LEAGUE ALEX ROSS SERIES 5 GREEN ARROW ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct JUL060265 $19.99)

BURSTING FROM THE PAGES OF 52

AN EXPLOSIVE STORY ARC FEATURING THE RETURN OF THE

METAL MEN

Written by

MARK VERHEIDEN &
MARC GUGGENHEIM

Illustrated by

PAT LEE

FEBRUARY
2007

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